# THE UNIVERSALIST *Leader*

A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY FOUNDED BY HOSEA BALLOU IN 1819

Volume CXLII January, 1960 Boston, Mass.

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**Continuing the CHRISTIAN LEADER and its predecessors (1819 to 1897), the UNIVERSALIST and its predecessors (1827 to 1897), the GOSPEL BANNER (1835 to 1897), the UNIVERSALIST LEADER (1897 to 1926), and THE CHRISTIAN LEADER (1926 to 1953).**

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**The bond of fellowship** in this church shall be a common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it and to co-operate in establishing the Kingdom for which he lived and died.
To that end we avow our faith in
God as Eternal and All-conquering Love,
The spiritual leadership of Jesus,
The supreme worth of every human personality,
The authority of truth known or to be known,
And in the power of men of good will and sacrificial spirit to overcome all evil and progressively establish the Kingdom of God.

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## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

### January, 1960 — No. 1

The cover shows a section of Mt. Vernon Street, Boston. This is the street Henry James called "the most beautiful street in America." Boston is not snow country, but about once every winter, Mt. Vernon Street is bright with the beauty of winter. The more beautiful it thus becomes, the less passable it is. In the middle ground surmounted by its Colonial clock tower, may be seen a part of the historic Charles Street Universalist Meeting House. The photograph is by Gordon N. Converse, staff photographer of *The Christian Science Monitor.*

**Fenwick L. Leavitt, Jr.,** minister of the First Universalist Church of Lynn, Mass., reached back into our history to document his post-assembly sermon, **We Still Believe.** At our request, Dr. Leavitt sent us the text for publication.

**Gordon B. McKeeman,** minister of St. Paul's Universalist Church, Palmer, Mass., corrects the misunderstandings and clears up the confusions brought about by the secular press reports of debates over the purposes of the proposed Association of Universalist and Unitarian churches in his sermon essay, **Questions About Jesus.**

**Albert Q. Perry,** minister of the City Temple Universalist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, has significant things to say about the proposed consolidation of the national organizations, The Universalist Church of America and the American Unitarian Association in his commentary, **Decisions and Implications.**

**The brief commentaries** on the proposed association of Universalist Unitarian Churches by Harold S. Latham and Dr. Ellsworth C. Reamon, both past presidents of The Universalist Church of America, and Dr. Harmon M. Gehr were solicited by the editor. Dr. Parkhurst and Mr. MacPherson's commentaries were taken from their church bulletins. The three sermon essays printed in this number, also solicited by the editor, were abridged by their authors.

**Raymond Adams,** professor of English in the University of North Carolina, loyal and active Universalist layman, presents a brilliant exposition of the pressures toward conformity in contemporary American life in his essay, **It's Harder to be a Village Atheist Now.**



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# We Still Believe

Fenwick L. Leavitt, Jr.

*Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right, is acceptable to him — Acts 10:34*

THERE are occasions in a preaching ministry when one is called upon to stray from his most carefully laid plans. I know you will forgive me this morning if I discuss the announced subject with an approach completely different from what I had planned. During the period when your delegates were attending our Biennial General Assembly, the newspapers, which are usually read in this section of the country, carried certain front-page stories which raised many questions in the minds of our members and friends. These cannot be put to one side lightly.

When I planned my sermons for this season of the year, it was my intention to discuss the subject *We Still Believe* with the theme of All Souls Day foremost in my mind. In every Universalist Church this is an important day. On this day, we reassert the bases of our faith. We are concerned with every person who ever lived on the face of the earth, both here and hereafter. We are universalists, not partialists. This is the core. Central to the thought of every generation, this thought has permeated the life of our churches across the land. Since our beginnings as a denomination, we have been condemned by churchmen of other beliefs. In some cases stones have been hurled. In others denominational leaders have condemned us for heresy against the Christian cause. Through it all, we have maintained that solemn judgment which was held by the Father of the Universalist Church when he picked up the stone that had been hurled through the window of the meeting place where he was speaking and held it in his hand while he said, "As an object this stone is heavy, but as an argument it doesn't bear much weight."

Today, one hundred and seventy-five years later, in spite of the hardships which have always been borne by those who have stood for a gospel that is different, we still believe. Even when a national church leader speaks in Boston, as one did a few years ago, and says (as reported in the *Boston Herald*):

> All men are not brothers. If there is any doctrine that Christ denied, it was certainly the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. This is the greatest American devilish heresy — the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Even when such words are uttered, we remember the fundamental principle upon which all the teachings of our faith are based, as suggested by Dr. James M. Pullman and Dr. Frank Oliver Hall in a pamphlet entitled *Bible Universalism,* which they prepared many years ago. The basis they described as "The Universal Fatherhood of God" as proclaimed in the ancient Old Testament book of Malachi, 'Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?' And the next great principle is implied by the first, 'The Universal Brotherhood of Man,' as reported in the book of Acts in the New Testament, 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men.'" And as we have lived to learn more of man, we have become so firmly entrenched in this basic thought that we give it but little time and thought. It is taken for granted. We still believe, even more firmly than ever before.

Since my return from the Syracuse meeting, however, I have discovered that a slightly different approach is essential. This week I have opened books not on my active reference shelf. I have taken time

to restudy writings of the beloved former ministers of this church. They are still fascinating. They express themselves in words and phrases which are different and even strange to our ears, but they said important things and stated truths which are heard in this pulpit, and in countless others such as ours, on any Sunday morning in 1959. They were Universalists with a capital U. We are Universalists with a capital U. In basic thought, we are one in a long tradition which has known no end.

There are differences, of course. This would be expected with the passing of time. In a liberal church — the basic framework under which we are classified — there are many differences, even within a given period. But in a liberal church, in contrast to the orthodox tradition, we respect differences honestly held as a result of our differing backgrounds and approaches. The orthodox Church expects all to fit into a single pattern of beliefs and practices.

You may be interested to know that when Universalist folk first gathered together in national meetings in the city of Philadelphia in the year 1790, this was an important area of discussion. Our friend and minister, Dr. Frederic Perkins, in a pamphlet entitled *Beliefs Commonly Held Among Us* said:

> Noteworthy and admirable is the broad inclusive spirit of this declaration. These early Universalists differed widely as to forms of worship and the observance of the traditional ordinances. They did not seek uniformity. They sought to preserve "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and respected each other's differences.

Dr. Perkins felt that their statement in regard to the ordinances was worthy of being quoted. They said:

> Whereas a great diversity of opinions has prevailed in all ages of the church upon the subjects of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and as this diversity of opinion has often been the means of dividing Christians who were united by the same spirit in more essential articles, we agree to admit such persons who hold the articles of faith and maintain good works into membership, whatever their opinion may be as to the nature, form or obligation of any of the ordinances.

In these latter days of the twentieth century, differences of opinion on these same subjects still exist, but they do not divide. Our fathers taught us well. The essential spirit is the important thing. This, too, we still believe.

This Philadelphia statement was written by men who were wise in statesmanship. They were not exactly inexperienced either. Dr. Benjamin Rush is considered the chief author. He was one of the most eminent Universalist laymen of his day. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and probably was an advisor of Thomas Jefferson in its writing. He was a distinguished physician and professor of medicine, a scientist and philosopher. He is credited with having organized the first anti-slavery society in America and being a pioneer in the fields of prison reform and public education. Now he is considered the father of modern psychiatry. He was a renaissance man in the same stature as Jefferson.

Dr. Rush, from the fullness of his life and understanding, realized the importance of recognizing differences of opinion which exist in the minds of honest men and women; and he found a way to make a place for it within the structure of his Church. He helped to build into our Universalist Church the thought which was later expressed by Hosea Ballou in the dramatic words which we cherish

> If we agree in brotherly love, there is no disagreement that can do us any injury; but if we do not, no other agreement can do us any good.

With this basis we can fuse into a working unity men and women of infinite variety. And, furthermore, we do. This is important today, even as it was in our beginnings. No one is excluded for having varied from the center. We still believe!

During the recent General Assembly, the editors of newspapers in this area seemed to feel that the most important part of our meetings came with reference to the use of the name of Jesus. This may have been the result of their own background in churches which demand the acceptance of an established pattern, with no allowance for individual interpretation. More probably they recognized only that, with this subject, they could make alarming headlines which would help sell newspapers.

Re-reading Dr. Perkins' pamphlet to which I have previously referred, I find a section directly pertaining to this subject matter. Dr. Perkins said:

> One of the characteristics of our fellowship is that it has room for different types of people to whom Jesus appeals in different ways. There are, for instance, people of a mystical nature to whom Jesus is a living presence, a personal saviour, in a very intimate sense. He is for them a bread of life, and by feeding on him they

renew strength to follow his teachings. Then there are others to whom the *teachings* of Jesus rather than the Teacher make the stronger appeal. They respond to his gospel of love to God and Man and give themselves wholeheartedly to the task of rebuilding a shattered world by the power of good will. They may talk little about Jesus, but they are faithful to all that he represents.

Dr. Perkins, minister of this church between 1905 and 1927, goes on in his next paragraph to say:

> There is room in our fellowship for both of these types. We respect both and would have them respect each other. What the spirit of our churches expects is that neither shall set up *his* way of thinking about Jesus as a test of discipleship.

A little later in the section Dr. Perkins went on to quote Hosea Ballou, the founder of modern Universalism, who said in regard to those who recognized the Christian heritage of Love of God and Love to Man:

> Let your denomination be what it may, let you live in whatever part of the world you will, you are a friend to the religion of Jesus and you have sweet communion with him.

In all of this we hear and see statements and thoughts which are peculiarly familiar. This is the spirit which is found in our Churches across the land. Little can be added to this thought. Dr. Perkins was precise in this as in everything else. Here is our tradition. We still believe!

Dr. James M. Pullman, minister of this church between 1885 and 1903, in the pamphlet which I mentioned at the beginning, entitled *Bible Universalism,* has an interesting statement to make in regard to the interpretation of basic Universalism. The very first question discussed in the entire booklet is, "What is Universalism?" His answer is one that has been overlooked for lo these many years. He said:

> Universalism is Universe Religion; the Philosophy of the Universal; the attempt to state religion affirmatively, positively, and in terms that will embrace all of humanity. He quotes Acts 10:34, which according to the most recent translation reads: "And Peter opened his mouth and said, 'Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.' "

Dr. Pullman was invited to give one of the addresses at the centennial observance of the Winchester Profession of Faith, held in Winchester, N.H. in 1903. This was a major address entitled *Exposition of Universalism.* In this work he said:

> Universalism as a faith is just universalized Christianity — a strict development of Christianity out of its special form into a universal form — the central teaching of Jesus taken out from under provincial and encumbering accretions and tuned to a universal faith.

Some of us remember a book which was published soon after the recent war, entitled *The Anatomy of Peace,* written by Emery Reeves. It contained some fascinating thoughts. In one Reeves said:

> "What was divine and civilizing in Christianity was its monotheism, its universalism. The doctrine which teaches that all men are created equal in the sight of God and are ruled by one God, with one law over all men, was the one really revolutionary idea in human history." At the conclusion of this chapter, he wrote: "Human society can be saved only by universalism. Unless the Christian churches return to this central doctrine of their religion and make it the central doctrine of their practice, they will vanish before the irresistible power of a new religion of universalism which is bound to arise from the ruin and suffering caused by the impending collapse of the era of nationalism."

Much of this same thought was expressed last winter at the fourth of our Lenten discussion meetings by Dr. Philip R. Giles, General Superintendent of The Universalist Church of America. Those of you who were present will remember his thrilling words. A week later, on March 22, they were published in our *Times.* Listen again to the leader of our churches today:

> I am convinced that Universalism, in its modern conception, has an answer for this troubled world. Until we reach the time where there is respect, understanding and empathy between the people of different cultures, religions and political traditions, we shall never have peace. In my mind Universalism has an answer in this area. Universalism respects the cultures, religions and traditions of other people. That does not say that we are going to become Buddhists or anything else. We can't. We shall always be of the Christian fold, even though Christians of the traditional sense won't have anything to do with us. Our roots are in Christianity and the Christian tradition. We can't rip them out. But we can interpret Christianity as having respect, understanding and empathy with those who may differ from us. In my opinion this is the only attitude which will bring peace upon this earth, either between people or nations.

These thoughts all fit together. Dr. Pullman's statement in regard to Universalism being Christianity drawn out to its universal form and freed from the provincialisms and the accretions which it has gathered around it is important. Emery Reeves, a layman whose religious faith I do not know, says that this form of Christianity is needed in order to save our human society. And now Dr. Giles says, "Here it is. This will bring peace — the great challenge of our time."

None of these is saying that it is necessary to leave the tradition and heritage of Christianity to build this type of universal religion and philosophy. Each is saying that in order to grow to its fullness, Christianity must leave behind its narrow provincialism of practice and exclusiveness of its creeds and emerge into the fullness of its message and its central gospel and be about its saving work of helping wherever possible to create a world of brotherhood and law by the persuasive power of love.

This tradition of our fathers is dear to our hearts. Through it we seek to state our faith affirmatively and positively in terms which embrace all of humanity, and by our actions show that we mean what we say. We still believe.

We still believe! Undergirding our faith is a firm conviction that "What is evil in man can't be good in God," as was so ably stated by Angus Hector MacLean in a recent address. We might also add that there is only one basic Good toward which we must strive and in which we can find enough challenge to keep us busy the rest of our lives. This single Good is found in the basic faith of Universalism as described by Dr. Pullman in the familiar Biblical phrases:

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"
"He hath made of one blood all nations of men."

In this we live and move and have our being. In these words we meet the challenge of a world divided against itself. In these words of the ancient leaders of the Judeo-Christian tradition, we build the foundation of a structure of faith concerned with the here as well as the hereafter — a faith which will lead the world's opinion into a future worthy of the visions which our fathers beheld and our children will cherish — a faith which gives our ancient gospel of Universal Salvation a new meaning and power. We still believe!

Annual United Nations Sunday was observed at the Universalist Church of New York, October 25, with representatives of various U.N. delegations in attendance and with the sermon being preached by Major General Bela Kiraly (right) commander of Hungary's "Freedom Fighters" in the 1956 revolt. Congratulating Major General Kiraly, who spoke on **The U.N., Hungary, and World Peace,** are the Rev. Leonard Helie, church pastor, and Miss Cely Carrillo, a Philippine member of the church, choir soloist, and star of the Broadway musical, **Flower Drum Song.**

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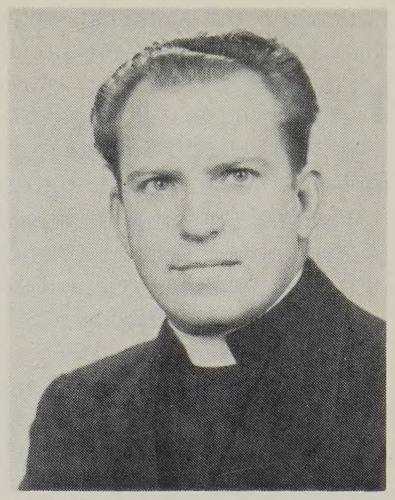
Americans should be careful to avoid insisting that their own political and economic institutions embody the moral norms for all nations. A kind of moral "statute of limitations" in the behavior of nations is operating in history, involving the forgetting of past evils.

— Dr. John C. Bennett,
Dean of Faculty, professor of Christian Theology,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

# Questions About Jesus

Gordon B. McKeeman



*We shall continue in whatever manner and by whatever means we desire and deem appropriate to find inspiration in the life of Jesus, wisdom in his teachings and the call to consecration in his death.*

THE accounts that have appeared in the newspapers of the convention of The Universalist Church of America, and its joint biennial conference with the American Unitarian Association have caused confusion and more than a little apprehension in some quarters; and I can understand the apprehension and the confusion.

In order to clarify the issues that are involved, it seems necessary to take a brief look at our history as a church.

Universalism, in a modern sense, began when men began to take exception to some of Christianity's cherished doctrines. Before I can explain to which of these doctrines we took exception, you must first know what *Christianity* means in its technical sense. It means more than just being a decent, upright human being. The doctrines of Christianity are these, fundamentally: First, Christians believe that human beings are born sinful and that they remain sinful inevitably. Second, Christians believe that the sins which men commit are an affront to God. Because God is affronted by the sins of men, Christians believe that God justly condemns most men to hell. *Most* may be inaccurate, because churches differ on this point. However, say the Christians, God is loving and saves some people from hell. How many and by what means, is a matter for distinctions and differences among churches. But all Christian Churches believe that this salvation is in some way effected by Jesus Christ, who is believed to be God's only son, sent to earth to save men from their sins. There are major differences among Christians as to whom is to be saved, and how this salvation is to be effected. Some say that people are saved by what they believe; others, by their good works; and some even say that in order to be saved, you must belong to the right Church. Over many generations, Universalists have been more generous in their opinions and more merciful in their inclinations. Universalism began by assuming that God is love and if God be love, He will surely never condemn any of his children to an eternal suffering in hell. This was the beginning of Universalism.

The critics of Universalism replied that this would sever the nerve of moral effort. If everyone eventually goes to heaven anyway, they ask, what is the motivation for living a good, upright, moral life?

This is what other people thought of early Universalism and its teachings that all men would finally be saved. The conclusion to which one must come, if one believes what the orthodox say, is that we must be scared into being good; that no one is good by natural inclination, but naturally evil, and must be tormented by the fear of hell in order to make any effort in the direction of a good, moral life. So the Universalist doctrine was never acceptable to the majority of Christians. As a matter of fact, they thought that Universalism would produce despicable moral character. As time went on, they discovered that these claims, which they had made against Universalists, were not true. Far from being immoral, Universalists were in the forefront of practically every advance on the social scene. In prison reform, in anti-slavery measures, in the fight for women's rights, in the founding of the Red Cross, and in countless other ways, Universalists proved by their lives that the things the orthodox had said about them were simply not true. After a while the controversy abated and friendly relations grew between Universalists and other churches; differences were

minimized and similarities emphasized and in time there came an era of good feeling. Many Universalists thought that the work of the Universalist Church was done and that it would be wise for us to merge with some church similar to ours; preferably, most of them thought, the Congregational Church.

Then, in 1944, the Universalists applied for membership in the Federal Council of Churches (now called the National Council of Churches) and the application was rejected. It was rejected on the grounds that Universalists were not Christian, since they did not believe that Jesus Christ was the only begotten son of God. This was the only test of a Christian; if he believed this, he was a Christian; if he didn't, then he couldn't be. This was a blow to most Universalists who had always considered themselves Christian, if of a somewhat peculiar stripe. They were shocked and surprised that the majority of Christians had, by definition, excluded them from Christianity.

What to do about it was the problem that faced Universalists. There were two general trends. The first was to insist that the definition of Christianity which was proposed by the Federal Council of Churches was altogether too narrow; that it dealt with a religion *about* Jesus and ignored any reference to the religion which Jesus himself professed and practiced, which he summarized as "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." All this, which Jesus plainly taught, was ignored. The Christians decided that if you didn't believe that Jesus Christ was the only begotten son of God, you were not a Christian. Many of us pleaded that the Federal Council of Churches did not really mean what it said. Our application was resubmitted, and it was rejected again on the same grounds.

Others took a somewhat different approach. They pointed out that the things Jesus taught about love to God and love to man were not exclusively Christian; that these insights into religion were shared, not only by the Jews, but also by most of the other major religious groups in the world; that these truths of Jesus were universal truths; that they were found in most of the world's religious traditions. So we began to find a new and promising mission for our ancient and honored name. *Universalists* began to mean believers in universal truths, believers in universal salvation, believers in a universal outlook. We began to develop symbols to express our faith. The universal truths taught by Jesus and revered by Universalists, whether *called* Christians or not, were symbolized by the circle within which was put the cross to indicate that these truths have come to us through the medium of Christianity, its wisdom, its insights, its symbolism. That symbol has been in use among us for twelve years now. In the time that has elapsed since the rejection of the Universalists by the Federal Council of Churches, there has been little disposition on the part of Christians to broaden their definition of Christian to include others who consider themselves Christian, such as many Universalists and Unitarians. Although we use Christian words and symbols and hymns, though we stand in reverence before the life and teachings of Jesus and find in his life an unparalleled example of consecrated living, the National Council of Churches seems to think that the matter of being a Christian is reducible to a definition. Surely, if one thinks of Christian as meaning one who seeks to follow the life and teachings of Jesus, we certainly qualify as Christians. If, however, we are forced to agree to the narrow, dogmatic and obviously unsubstantiated creed of the Council, we will be forced to say, "No, we cannot, by that definition, consider ourselves to be Christians." The evidences are, unfortunately I think, that Christians are becoming more insistent on their narrower definition; and in state and local Councils of Churches all over this country, there is increasing pressure to include theological statements that exclude Universalists and Unitarians. Therefore, many Universalists and Unitarians say, "If this is what it means to be a Christian, then you can count me out. I want no part of any religion that is so narrow, so dogmatic, so blind to any virtues but its own." So much for history.

Let us now look at our world. We are aware that the world has shrunken to a neighborhood. We have become aware in recent centuries of people beyond the fringes of the North Atlantic Ocean who have ancient traditions and noble heritages of their own. In our one world, we must live together with these people, or we shall surely all perish together. It seems to me that it is folly to act as though we have all truth and all virtue and our neighbors in China, Tibet, the Near East and India have none at all; simply because their religion is different from ours. Yet this is precisely the position of the Christian who insists that there are no virtues (and no salvation) apart from some narrow theological

dogma; a dogma which, incidentally, was evolved, written down and made compulsory long before people in the Western Hemisphere had a notion that there were any other people in the world with convictions as deep as their own in religious matters. I am convinced that it is much too dangerous to allow arrogance, narrowness and closed minds in religion. Early Universalists challenged the narrowness of Christianity, by insisting that a loving God would save all. Present day Universalists challenge the narrowness of Christianity by insisting that we must develop a more inclusive religious fellowship that welcomes any seeker, any worshipers of whatever label, connection, conviction or tradition in the effort to build a world community of brotherhood, understanding and peace. At this point in the history of the world, we simply cannot afford divisiveness, arrogance, or exclusiveness. For me, at least, this spirit of inclusiveness reflects the spirit of Jesus.

What did Jesus say? He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Not everyone who saith unto me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." Jesus was not one to insist upon a particular formula of words. What he wanted was a kind of life that helped other people to find life.

Now to address myself to some specific issues raised by the news stories and by what was done at Syracuse. Let me make it crystal clear — *we have not voted Jesus out.* Surely the life of a man so great as this cannot be expunged from the record of humanity or from the tradition of a church by a motion or a show of hands. We shall continue in whatever manner and by whatever means we desire and deem appropriate to find inspiration in the life of Jesus, wisdom in his teachings and the call to consecration in his death. We shall do this with the understanding and acceptance of our brothers in Universalist and Unitarian churches, whether they agree with us or not; for we are guaranteed freedom of belief and practice, and we can be Christians (in our own meaning of that term) so long as we dare to cherish the term for ourselves. As a matter of fact, our bond of fellowship as a group of Universalist and Unitarian churches is wider and deeper than any insistence upon a particular statement of faith. I should like to share with you the wording of our common purpose, as stated in the Constitution of the Unitarian Universalist Association: "The members of the Unitarian Universalist Association, dedicated to the principles of a free faith, unite in seeking:

1. To strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of our religious fellowship;

2. To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, and immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as "love to God and love to man";

3. To affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of every human personality, the dignity of man, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships;

4. To implement our vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice and peace;

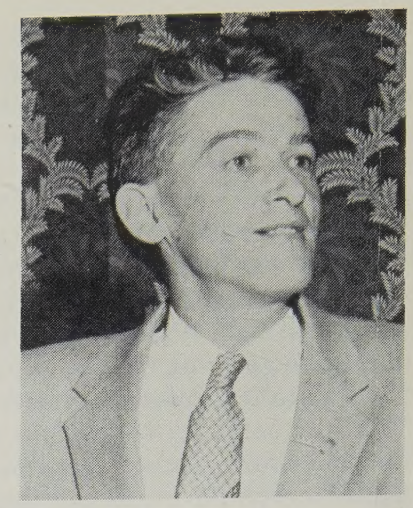
5. To serve the needs of member churches and fellowships, to organize new churches and fellowships, and to extend and strengthen liberal religion;

6. To encourage co-operation with men of good will in every land.

I submit to you that no one can join such an association and not feel a thrill of being part of a great and ennobling effort to improve the life of man upon earth. This is what binds us together. As I said before, we have not voted Jesus out, nor could we, nor do we wish to; nor have we abandoned our heritage. You cannot simply drop a heritage by a show of hands. Our heritage is a part of us as much as the multiplication table and the alphabet are a part of us. We have been nurtured in it and inspired by it and challenged to live up to it. The National Council may define us out of Christianity, but it cannot exclude us from the riches, the depths of wisdom and insight which are contained within Christianity. We can take and use or violate and abuse our heritage, but we cannot simply drop it. It is ours irrevocably. *Our* heritage includes an insistence upon greater breadth, greater understanding, greater generosity of spirit. So long as we continue these things, we shall be true to our heritage *and* to the heritage of Jesus, whether we name him by name or not. Surely no formula of words can make us do this; no omission of words can prevent it if we will it to be so. Most of all, the standard by which we judge religions and their adherents is the standard which Jesus used — "By their fruits ye shall know them."

# Decisions and Implications

Albert Q. Perry



*In the future, if we do not wish to drift into negativeness or nothingness, we shall have to establish and keep up to date a definition of the particular liberalism for which we exist.*

A GENERAL ASSEMBLY of The Universalist Church of America is always a thrilling experience for one committed to the cause of inclusive liberal religion. At the sessions one gains a new awareness of the many and varied fronts on which we are making progress. One is helped to loosen the crust of parochialism which inevitably forms as one focuses attention upon local needs and opportunities

Despite all of the confusion caused by merger discussions and denominational reorganization, Universalism has been moving ahead steadily in recent years. On the local level, Universalist churches have been developing new programs, erecting new buildings, interesting new people, improving their financial conditions and generally finding a strengthened sense of mission and purpose. Not all churches have shared in this progress and not all people in any church have believed it possible, but the weight of the evidence forthcoming from a national assembly supports a large measure of optimism in the ability of Universalism to serve the vital needs and to express the positive convictions of people in this twentieth century.

As a denomination, we have also been moving ahead. Local churches have increased contributions to the Unified Appeal, making possible a growing program of services to our churches and to our times. In the last two years, we have undertaken a new Church Extension program nationally which combines an effort to serve isolated Universalists through the Church of the Larger Fellowship and to establish new movements in areas which are unserved. Our literature and promotional material is taking on a "hard sell" character, and it has a new look as we solicit the skills of the many artists in our congregations. We are recruiting more young men for the ministry. Our Service Program continues to be a direct expression of our traditional concern for people and logical convictions about the significance of the human venture. It has not become, as in some other movements, either subordinated to a missionary goal or isolated from the membership in some "professional" realm wherein the lay person may not really participate.

All of this is good and should be a source of pride and inspiration to us as we face our special needs and opportunities. If nothing else, a General Assembly is a reminder to each of us that whenever and wherever we face our times and our communities energetically, imaginatively and idealistically, we can create a stronger church — more worthy of our pride and more capable of serving us individually.

Without any doubt, the major focus of interest at the Syracuse Assembly was on the question of denominational merger or "consolidation" of The Universalist Church of America and the American Unitarian Association. Following the plebiscite last winter, a specific proposal for uniting these two historic, liberal movements was drawn up and presented to the Syracuse meeting for discussion, possible change, and either outright rejection or submission to the churches for ratification.

After a great deal of discussion and a few slight changes, the proposed Constitution and Bylaws for what would be called "The Unitarian Universalist Association" were approved and referred to the churches for a vote this winter. If approved by that vote, they will be formally ratified by a special General Assembly to be held next May and what, to all intents and purposes, will be a new denomination, will take the place of the two old, historic ones. I do not

now have the time to discuss the very long and involved document which was approved, but I would mention a few items which I considered significant and symptomatic.

First, in the document and perhaps first in importance was the formal statement of purpose or purposes for which this denomination would be established. In place of the Avowal of Faith which traditionally has been the descriptive Bond of Fellowship of Universalists and the definitive characteristic for which we have existed, the new organization would unite people in seeking:

1. To strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of our religious fellowship;
2. To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, and immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as "love to God and love to man";
3. To affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of every human personality and the use of the democratic method in human relationships;
4. To implement our vision of one world by striving for a world community based upon ideals of brotherhood and peace;
5. To serve the needs of member churches and fellowships, to organize new churches and fellowships, and to extend and strengthen liberal religion;
6. To encourage co-operation with men of good will of all faiths at home and abroad.

This is too long and involved to have any use in a service of worship and, as such, presents Universalist Churches with a real problem. Although we have traditionally enjoyed the freedom to interpret our Avowal of Faith, in accordance with personal views and experiences and needs, it has served at least as a common point of departure by means of which we might relate ourselves to one another within the atmosphere of common worship. Although some have had serious reservations about one or another of these Affirmations, those that one could conscientiously avow have been a source of reassurance in easily remembered, regularly repeated form which had relevance to our personal problems.

Presumably, this statement of purpose was intended to be a compromise between the traditional statements of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations, and probably we had no right to expect more than a compromise. However, it must be noted that entirely omitted was the optimistic emphasis which, to my way of thinking, was our most significant and valuable characteristic. In place of the affirmation which proclaimed that love was divine or that God was love, and that this force was "unconquerable", we have an exhortation to love God and man whatever we expect the results to be. In place of an affirmation that good will and sacrificial service will progressively overcome all evil, we are urged to co-operate with those who have good will toward us. This, I would proclaim as *the least idealistic statement ever made by any organized religious movement.* The only conclusions that one can reach is that these statements are not compromises but a complete and abject surrender of a great and creative faith.

I will not now go into all the debate which was precipitated by the failure to mention Jesus by name or to specifically recognize that we have our roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It did not appear in the original draft and many objected to its omission. Although a meaningless compromise was worked out, the real problem was not resolved, and that is the relationship of liberal religion to our spiritual inheritance. Personally, I always expect adolescents to be somewhat ashamed of their parents. This is a natural part of growing up and gaining experience in independence. People of emotional maturity, even though they continue to differ greatly from their parents, make peace with their past and have faith in their personal accomplishments, even as they recognize their rootage in a continuing process of growth. I do not consider myself as narrow-minded nor as extremely conservative, but I do not want to be a part of an adolescent church. I believe that we, as a church, ought to conform to the kind of maturity which we recognize as essential for individuals. If we have not done this in this statement of purpose — and I am not sure that we have — there is a real danger that liberal religion will become a superficial movement.

There are other issues which precipitated considerable debate, but which can be noted only briefly. These would include the following:

1. In the question of regional or state organization through which the local church is served, it was decided to empower the national organization to determine lines, forms and patterns of organization and to discourage, if not destroy, the regional autonomy which Universalism has historically possessed and which, strangely, many Unitarians seemed to desire;

2. Representation at General Assemblies will be changed from the equality which has long prevailed and the larger churches will have many times the number of delegates permitted to the smaller ones;
3. The handling of business and nominations at General Assemblies will be considerably systematized and spontaneity will be greatly restrained through the establishment of complicated rules and procedures for initiating personal concerns;
4. Officers of the new denomination will have the same titles and about the same functions as in the present Unitarian Association.

One matter, which greatly disturbed me was a somewhat subtle one, and that was the power, prestige and place of ministers in the new denomination. I would go back and notice that one of the things which disturbed me, when the Unitarian and Universalist young people united their fellowships a few years ago, was a changed attitude toward ministers which I think that most Universalists sensed. Previous to the merger, we had enjoyed a relaxed relationship with our youth. Ministers commonly attended young people's conferences; their opinions were occasionally invited; and on very rare occasions their advice was taken. Under L.R.Y. there was a subtle change. Most ministers decided that they were not really welcome, stopped attending conferences, and found it increasingly difficult to provide their youth with a healthy influence.

I have a feeling that the same tendency will result from this consolidation. In our deliberations, it was proclaimed on several occasions that this was an organization of laymen and that ministers should have no special rights or privileges in it. Retired ministers lost the right to vote as they have previously done; confidential ministerial records were made the property of the Board of Trustees rather than of a separate, independent Fellowship Committee; and ordination became a local church rather than a denominational function.

I am not one who believes that the clergy should be considered as sacred, but I think that ministers must be granted some prestige and respect if they are to be able to provide the influence and inspiration which they are expected to provide in times of crisis and difficulty.

As some of you know, I have had some serious reservations about the merger proposals. These developed slowly, as a result of experience in co-operative efforts, but should not be considered as resulting from personal dislike of individual Unitarians or disrespect for the Unitarian Church. I felt that our traditions and abilities differed in many respects; that both have worth and value; but that in co-operative endeavors, we were the ones to surrender our heritage. However, I tried with some success to help you look at merger proposals objectively and rationally and not to exert undue influence on your decision. Finally, we voted against merger by a two to one margin.

At Syracuse, I tried without success to incorporate in the plan of consolidation some of the values and traditions which have been significantly Universalist. To a certain extent, I was considered as the leader of the opposition to most aspects of this plan of union. I do not know how this was reported in the local newspapers, but last Sunday morning, when I was breakfasting in Cleveland, I read that the Rev. Albert Perry of Cincinnati made impassioned pleas for the traditions of Universalism.

Let me say frankly that I personally have no regrets about any of this. I have stood for what I considered to be true and right, and no honest man can do less. I would also point out that in all of this I have tried to act as an individual and not as the mouthpiece of this church. As an actual fact, I have consciously encouraged the belief on the part of the pro-merger Universalists and neighboring Unitarians that I was personally responsible for any anti-merger steps taken by this church. Now, if any sizeable group in this church is embarrassed by my stand or if you think that the policies which I have supported will complicate your relationships with Unitarians on a local level, let me say that I am quite willing to take the full blame. My resignation is always available and you need only to request it in order to make a new start.

At the moment, I see little chance of reversing the trend toward consolidation and re-establishing the Universalist denomination as a separate, close-knit movement. Possibly, this plan could be defeated in the coming plebiscite, but I think that many churches have so completely transferred their loyalties that the result of an effort to separate now would be a fragmentation of our denomination. I am not saying that people should not vote as their consciences dictate, and I will not be disturbed if we fail to ratify this plan; but I believe that the plan will be ratified and that there is almost no alternative to ratification.

Furthermore, I see little possibility of our remaining outside the new denomination even if we should hap-

pen to disapprove of it in some aspects. As a somewhat isolated church insofar as Universalism is concerned, we cannot look to a disaffected remnant with whom to join and from which to receive the fellowship and opportunities that we need. Efforts to create such blocks may be attempted in some sections, either within or without the denomination, but these will be too far away to serve our needs. Even though the services and endeavors of a "Unitarian Universalist Association" are considerably different from what we might desire, I think we shall have to realistically recognize that something is better than nothing.

I would say that in this looser and less inspiring movement, I anticipate the need for our local church to be far more specific about its nature and mission than it has previously bothered to be. I regret this loss of breadth and flexibility, but it will make possible the kind of aggressiveness which has recently been a characteristic of Unitarianism. Previously, we have been satisfied merely to identify ourselves as Universalist and this really meant something very positive and pertinent to our times, even though interpreted very broadly. In the future, if we do not wish to drift into negativism or nothingness, we shall have to establish and keep up-to-date a definition of the particular kind of liberalism for which we exist. At the very least, we shall have to incorporate our Avowal of Faith, or some acceptable alternative to it, in our Constitution so that when it is used in a worship service, it may express more than the whim of a minister.

Finally, although I regret many things that have happened, I am not pessimistic about the future of our church.

— U.A. — U.A. — U.A. — U.A. — U.A. — U.A. —

## A CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH UNIVERSALISM MAY FLOW

Church financing should be a *Spiritual* adventure — not just a list of receipts and expenditures. Money should be sacred, and church finance a venture in *Life Building* — in building better people and a better Church. At what points can your program be strengthened? Is your Church giving with understanding devotion to the needs of the world today?

If all churches fulfill their obligations, The Universalist Church of America will be provided with sufficient funds to carry on its important work of education, publications, public relations, service, work with youth, and other activities which must necessarily be conducted nationally. Current Unified Appeal contributions are increasing. As each church accepts its full responsibility, Universalism will continue to grow.

Jesus referred to money and its use more times than to any other single subject. The use of money indicates a person's interests. Money is a channel through which Universalism may flow.

— U.A. — U.A. — U.A. — U.A. — U.A. — U.A. —

Outlawing all atomic weapons would be a magnificent gesture. However, it should be remembered that Gettysburg had a local ordinance forbidding the discharge of firearms.

— Parts Pups

If modern architecture is any indication people who throw stones are practically extinct.

— Frank G. McInnis

Some of the new books are so down to earth they should be plowed under.

— Anna Herbert

Word comes that at Syracuse by another overwhelming majority the Unitarians and Universalists voted to consolidate. Now the two machineries will move a few inches nearer together. Pretty soon we'll be asked to vote again whether we mean it.

— Harold Scott in *The Ram's Horn*

A new age demands a new kind of religion — one which will be adequate for new and larger needs. Whether we like it or not, different races and ideologies are today being squeezed into a smaller world. The friction between these differences will explode our world unless we have a "super" religion big enough to include all the differences, and to develop a new universal ethic beyond the particulars of each.

— John Cummins

## A PAST PRESIDENT ON THE CHRISTIAN BASIS OF UNIVERSALISM

I do not for a moment criticize or question the decisions which others make on the place of Jesus in our religious philosophy. I appreciate fully that all such decisions are absolutely individual and personal, or at least should be, that they should be based on the convictions which one has. I realize, too, that it is one of the tenets of Universalism that adherence to no one set of principles is necessary, that a Universalist may believe what he likes and be a Universalist. But I have always assumed that in spite of divergence here, there and everywhere, the Universalist church is basically Christian.

To be sure, we are to search for truth wherever it may be found; to be sure, we are to learn what we can from the great religious leaders of other than Christian faith, but we still remain Christian, followers of Jesus, adding to our Christianity all that we can from these other sources, enriching, broadening, adapting our beliefs as circumstances warrant from our study of these other leaders. But that we should retain the Christian foundation and *acknowledge it*, I have never questioned.

That there was strong opposition among those at Syracuse to the use of the name of Jesus, to our acknowledgment of him, is shown by the continued fight against it. First, it was out, then it was in, and then it was out . . ad nauseam. The final compromise is, in my opinion, wishy-washy. Had we kept to one of the defeated proposals which, in effect indicated that we are a Christian body, but that we would recognize the importance of the teachings of others and add to our knowledge and belief from those teachings, I should have been well content.

But I cannot be content with an attitude which takes us out of the Christian world into this so-called larger field. I do not like the boast that I have heard made that now we have advanced beyond Christianity, that we are no longer restricted Christians, but people with world vision, et cetera.

I was so unhappy about all this at first that I felt I could not continue in the denomination. I know very well that the Syracuse action will not affect, in all probability, our little local church, but even so, I hesitated to continue an association with a denomination which had taken the position that it had.

But with the passing of a little time, I have somewhat "cooled off" and shall do nothing precipitant, though I am just as unhappy as ever about conditions. It has contributed to my increasing calmness to hear that some of the men whom I most respect in the denomination feel as strongly as I do.

One thing I must make clear: I have no feeling of bitterness, no resentment at the Syracuse actions. My whole point is that if I cannot find myself in sympathy with what is finally done, I must go to some other religious group with views with which I am more in sympathy — and I should go, if I did go, respecting fully the position taken by those whom I was leaving even though I could not myself accept them.

I know I am no theologian, I know that I am not at all qualified to argue on these matters and that any minister could put me to flight in five minutes — but fleeing, I should still hold to my way of thinking!!!

— HAROLD S. LATHAM

## TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE FAITH

I BELIEVE the heart of Jesus' faith was inclusiveness. He stressed generous qualities of prophetic Judaism and blended with them loving attitudes of his own. The result was spiritual magnificence, and two thousand years of distortion and misinterpretation have not been able to efface it. He taught that there was one God of all, pagans as well as Jews. He said to his disciples, "You are the light of the world", and he inferred a world that was greater than the little land of Palestine. He said, "the field is the world", and there was infinity and eternity in his words.

It was with something of that spirit that delegates of Universalist and Unitarian Churches met together in Syracuse. This understanding became even clearer during the course of five crowded days. It resulted in overwhelming support of a plan for consolidation of these two denominations in which the thought of inclusiveness dominated. A sentence from the proposed constitution states it clearly: "The members of the Unitarian Universalist Association, dedicated to the principles of a free faith, unite in seeking to cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, and immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as 'love to God and love to man.' "

It would be possible to speak of many encouraging reports that came to these meetings, of new churches and fellowships, membership increase, a new hymnal under preparation, exciting new buildings, et cetera. To me the most important development was the opening of a vista of growth and service in the spirit of inclusiveness. Ours is the age of

the atom, an age of power which will destroy us unless it is rightly controlled. But control cannot be by physical means alone. There must be a spirit which causes us to obliterate petty differences and learn our deeper likenesses. Voluntarily! A spirit like that our free churches have inherited. We behold it in Jesus and the prophets. We see it in the lives of Gandhi and Schweitzer. That spirit must increasingly animate our churches, bringing us together, making us effective for the world-wide brotherhood of man.

— HARMON M. GEHR

## REAMON ON MERGER

I was opposed primarily because I favored a plan with a broader base, a more inclusive plan, a federation of liberal churches wherein the resources of member bodies could be kept intact.

I opposed the plan as a protest against the pressure of the brass. The merger started at the grass roots, but was quickly taken over by the "leaders," who were not always careful about democratic procedures.

I am opposed because I firmly believe that it will result in an overemphasis on science and reason as the "Alpha and Omega" of religion. This attitude will be filtered down from the top and will find increasing expression through our educational material. It is happening already. Understand, I am not opposed to a union of science and religion, I favor it. Religion should make sense, but it must do more than that if it is to satisfy human need. When reason alone becomes God, the people in the pews are apt to suffer from frost-bite.

As one of the active members of the proposed liberal movement, the Universalists avow their faith in: God as Eternal and All-conquering love; the spiritual leadership of Jesus; the supreme worth of every human personality; the authority of truth known, or to be known; and the power of men of good will and sacrificial spirit to overcome all evil and progressively establish the Kingdom of God.

We have a gospel and we have a mission, and as long as I have life and strength, I intend to give myself to that gospel and mission.

— ELLSWORTH C. REAMON

## AGAIN, A MOST IMPORTANT POINT

Some have wrongly gained the impression that the acceptance of the Plan of Consolidation of the Unitarian Universalist Association in some way changes our work at the local level — our particular ways of doing things. It does not. What it really hopes to do is to stimulate us in the building of a growing, more effective program in spreading the liberal faith.

Section III, Article II, was amended at Syracuse to protect "the independence and autonomy" of our churches and to make this even more specific. The original section from the Blue Book was printed here last week. Now compare it and look carefully at the Section as amended — changes in the Section will be noted by parentheses.

"The Unitarian Universalist Association hereby declares and affirms the independence and autonomy of local churches, fellowships, (and associate members;) and nothing in this Constitution and Bylaws of the Association shall be deemed to infringe upon the congregational polity of churches and fellowships, (nor upon the exercise of direct control by their memberships of associate member organizations,) nor upon the individual freedom of belief, which are inherent in the Universalist and Unitarian heritages. No minister shall be required to subscribe to any particular interpretation of religion, or to any particular religious belief or creed to obtain and hold Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association."

Please study this carefully and understand its meaning. The "independence and autonomy" spirit has always been basic and dear to both denominations and no association by consolidation or anything else could change that. *Be sure* of that! There will always be safeguards to the free search for truth so long as either denomination exists.

— JOHN Q. PARKHURST
in *The Joliet Universalist*

## THE MINISTER'S CORNER

By now the word is out. The Convention (Universalist Church of America and American Unitarian Association) at Syracuse is over and your minister and delegates are attempting to return to the world "of the every day."

By an overwhelming majority, both delegate bodies have voted to send to all Universalist and Unitarian churches the definitive plan for consolidation of the two denominations. The churches may give the plan their acceptance or rejection. If accepted, the plan will be made legally binding for the denominations at their next Joint Assembly, now scheduled for May, 1960.

It is now the business of each local church and fellowship to examine the plan carefully and send in its vote by next April.

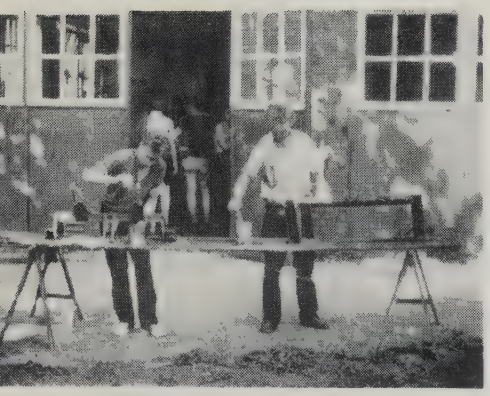
— DAVID H. MACPHERSON
in *The Uniter*

Educational assistance team in Jerusalem area of Jordan

# Universalist Service Committee

## *Food and Fellowship*

## 1960



Workcamp at home for emotionally disturbed German boys

Tent camp at Nordalb. Group will work with German children

Support of Ryder Community (interracial) Social Service Center, Chicago

Support of Jordan Neighborhood House Program for one hundred and sixty Negro children

# World Refugee Year Programs

West Berlin
Dr. and Mrs. Donald Lombard counsel East Berlin youth refugees shown above in West Berlin

Musberg, South Germany
Janet Stover, R.N. (center) assists in care of unwed refugee mothers and infants

## *Clothing and Care*

Support of School for Blind adults and children (some refugees) in Seoul, Korea

Two centers for children and youth in Tokyo and Day Care Center, rural Japan

Village development, near Madras, India

# Universalist Advance—1960

THE New Year brings us well into the second biennium of the Four-Year Universalist Advance Program adopted at Atlantic City, in the fall of 1957. In spite of preoccupation with matters of possible merger and its attendant anxieties and uncertainties, American Universalism did make significant advances in 1958 and 1959. The areas of Service, Extension and the Ministry, together with financial support for these activities, all showed growth nationally and regionally. Most important of all, a large number of Universalist churches showed improvement in program and growth in membership.

Now what of Universalist Advance, in 1960? Universalist Advance to what? And Why? The What, the goal, the end object, of all our church programs is the service of the religious needs of more and more people. And Why? The answer with which both mystic theists and naturalistic rationalists can agree is in the ringing affirmation of the founder of Christianity, "That they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

This more "abundant life" is sometimes opened to persons by the expression *and personification* of a universal ethical or metaphysical insight and sometimes (perhaps as often) by the gift of a coat for a needy child or a dispossessed refugee. Thus, our advance, which coincides with our ministry, runs the whole human gamut from genuine neighborly relations to church extension and on to material service and human fellowship for the needy at home and abroad.

And so What of Universalist Advance in 1960? It means, of course, the winning of people through most sincere service. This means an aggressive extension program to win more Universalists and to establish more Universalist Churches. Universalist Advance in this new year means, also, more Universalist help for others who are not and never can become organizationally Universalists. This, in turn, calls for more and larger Universalist Service Committee programs. Universalist advance in 1960 and in all the years ahead, under whatever form of organization, calls imperatively for the training of more Universalist ministers. This means recruiting more theological students *without delay* and the immediate increase of funds specifically tagged for scholarship aid for theological students. This Universalist program must, in turn, be supported by *a radical advance in giving* to both the Unified Appeal of our national organization and the finances of our regional and state organizations.

No one of these branches of our Universalist program stands alone. *Each one is dependent for its success on the success of all the others.*

The Universalist Advance program *must succeed* in 1960! The major "Why" is in the nature of our religion and the needs of our fellowmen in 1960. There is a lesser "Why" which like so many secondary factors is of very, very, great importance. If the Universalist fellowship, nationally, regionally, and locally, does not go full speed ahead carrying out *a successful growing program* in 1960, Universalists will become a liability to the new Unitarian Universalist Association, if and when it comes into being. If Universalists lag in their program or fail in their program in 1960 and if consolidation be not achieved, Universalists will of all churchmen be the most miserable. And if this condition comes about, Universalists will well deserve to be the most miserable of churchmen.

This present world needs Universalism in religion *now.* Let there be no marking of time or waiting for the outcome of Unitarian Universalist consolidation negotiations. So, let's go! Let there be Advance of Universalism on all fronts in 1960!

"Well," you say, "let the leaders lead," and well said this is. It is an important half truth, indeed, one of the most important half truths in the world. Your officers, national and regional, *are* hard-working leaders. Not one of them regards himself or herself as minister of a caretaker regime or denominational mortician. However loyal, intelligent, and industrious these leaders may be, they are helpless without the loyal, active, continuous support of the whole fellowship.

*(Continued on page 23)*

# The Clarence R. Skinner Award

## For the Most Significant Sermon of Social Concern of the Year

**The Massachusetts Universalist Social Action Committee** established the Clarence R. Skinner Award to be given to the preacher of the sermon which, in the Committee's judgment, best expresses Universalism's social principles. The award will be given for meritorious preaching, not necessarily annually. It is the purpose of the Social Action Committee to stimulate preaching concerned, in the words of the late Dean Skinner, with "the social implications of Universalism."

**The recipient** of the Clarence R. Skinner Award will be suitably honored at the annual meetings of the Massachusetts Universalist Convention. The winning sermon will be published and its author presented the sum of $25.00.

**Closing date** for the 1960 Clarence R. Skinner Award, March 1, 1960. Manuscripts should be mailed to The Clarence R. Skinner Award Committee, 125 Mount Vernon Street, Boston 8, Mass.

**Rules:**

1 — Sermons submitted must have been delivered during the months for which the award is to be given, March 1, 1959, through February 29, 1960.

2 — Any minister or layman, regardless of denomination, may submit entries, but not more than three.

3 — Manuscripts must be typed, double space, with suitable margins and with the author's name on the first and last pages.

4 — Two copies of each sermon must be submitted. One copy may be a carbon.

5 — Since the winning sermon will be published, suitable footnotes must be appended to all copyrighted material.

6 —The winning sermon becomes the property of the Massachusetts Universalist Social Action Committee. All other entries will be returned provided sufficient postage has been enclosed.

7 — The decision of the judges will be final.

*Committee of Judges:*

EDWARD HOPKINS, *Chairman*

DR. PHILIP R. GILES

REV. WALTER ROYAL JONES, JR.

REV. DONALD M. HINKLEY

PROFESSOR KINGBURY BADGER

1958 winner, the Rev. Manuel R. Holland, Groton, Massachusetts. Sermon published in The Universalist Leader, September, 1959.

# It's Harder To Be a Village Atheist Now

Raymond Adams

I HAVE been envying the old-time village atheist lately. I don't envy him his atheism, it was not so much unlike mine. In the days of Tom Paine or Robert Ingersoll, what went by the name of atheism was generally more unorthodoxy and not atheism at all. A good many of us and a good many people in more conventional churches might very likely have gotten the label "atheist" in those earlier times when any self-respecting town had its village atheist just as it had the village blacksmith and the village idiot. Hadleyburg, in Mark Twain's famous story of *The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg* had one of these unorthodox people — Jack Halliday, the gadfly of the town.

No, it's not the atheism of the village atheist that I envy; it's the village. Think how simple a thing it must have been to have been opposed in thought to a mere village. One would have been up against a mere half dozen eggheads — eggs come cheap by the dozen, but eggheads weren't as numerous as that. There would have been two or three ministers to spurn, a school teacher to argue with, and a local editor and a lawyer to talk with and find in secret agreement with what was popularly called atheism. Popularly called by whom? By the masses. But the masses weren't very massive — three or four hundred conventional people, or at most a thousand or two. Any atheist worth his salt could take on the whole of such a village and enjoy the conflict.

First of all, the atheist could meet his opposition face to face. That would have been a great advantage, for he could have explained himself and have had a good chance to clear up any misunderstanding or rumor that had got loose. He would have known them one by one and could put his finger on them. Besides knowing who they were, he would also have known what they were — who their parents and grandparents had been and what they themselves had been in their own salad days before they became so orthodox. There would have been some hesitancy on their part for it is a lot harder to cast the first stone at a man who has known your entire family or who has known you in your earlier days or who knows about you from your earlier association.

Secondly, his opposition would have known him and his family. Even if he were in their eyes a black sheep, they would have a tendency to overlook some radicalism for his family's sake. They would have understood the quirks of heredity that caused him to be as he was; and very often they would have remembered that the same traits in his grandfather gave the old man character at last. Or they would have known him in the days when some disillusioning incident shook his faith; and understanding the incident, they would have been sympathetic to his having been shaken by it. Yes, it must have been rather easy to have been the village atheist if one had a leaning toward atheism. All the advantages of a village lined themselves up beside one — the understanding of those who knew all about one, the chance to meet individuals one could name and talk to, the tempering of the attack on one because of the underlying kindliness of neighborhoods, and the relative ease of facing an opposition that was manageable because it numbered only a few hundred, all of whom lived in one place.

Contrast that with what is faced nowadays by a person (even in a village) who goes against public opinion and finds himself unorthodox. First of all, merely because of better communications, one knows that he is in opposition to widespread opinions to the contrary. I suppose the old village atheist knew that in a general way, but actually he had to face up to — and hope to face down — only that public opinion in his own community The opinions of a village were suigeneris, self originating. The editor, the preacher, the school teacher, were not without their contacts with the outside world; but they were very likely to have their own ideas. And it was so throughout the village. The opinions of one town differed from another town; they were particular opinions, not general ones. And the nonconformist had those particular opinions

to confute. He was not as generally aware of outside opinions as he now is.

As soon as one knows that conformity is widespread, one is up against a faceless conformity — a general opinion that one cannot fasten to individuals and so cannot meet face to face. This makes a very real difference to an unorthodox person now. He cannot know his opponents and he cannot hope ever to explain himself to all of them. He feels that much more outnumbered, that much more helpless, that much more a nonentity himself. Secondly, in addition to knowing that conventional ideas are widespread and beyond one's range of answering, one soon finds out that conventional ideas are manipulated. There are huge agencies in our day creating public opinion. *The village editors are gone*; the competing newspapers in cities are gone. The phrasing of the news and the expression of opinion is all done at one place and by thinkers who express syndicated opinions for a hundred or half a thousand papers. The same billboards face us on the roads of every state. The same advertisements are seen no matter where we pick up a printed page. The same programs are on radio and television everywhere at the same time. And so the forming of opinions has been removed from localities and we all get the same ready-made ideas at the same time.

This is similar to what has happened to our eating habits. The foods are packaged in some remote place and appear in stores everywhere. Local differences get ironed out. So, even if you wanted snap beans cooked in the Virginia way, you cannot find them on the shelves. Canned beans must be cooked in some general and neutral way that will serve as well in Massachusetts or Oregon as in Virginia. So much for beans. But the manipulation of ideas is something else.

Neutralism is not its aim. What is being built up, and quite deliberately built up, is a huge force of opinion that allows no dissension. The village atheist is really up against it now, for difference of opinion is no longer a local peculiarity nor even a minority differing from a large majority. Now what was another opinion becomes an error and a treason and not a valid opinion at all. Now a vast uniformity can be built up against unorthodoxy. And the means of building it up are so skillful and so nearly without resistance and counter influence that uniformity can overwhelm unorthodoxy.

With what result? With the result that unorthodoxy becomes apologetic and forgets that there is a right to be unorthodox. And when it has become apologetic, *unorthodoxy wastes its energy trying to prove that it is not so unorthodox after all,* but that it is somewhere out in the middle ground with orthodoxy, working for the same good ends, labeled a little differently perhaps, but the same thing at heart. And so it becomes the same thing at heart and loses its reason for being — for if it is the same thing, then the vast conformity can do the job better and nonconformity might as well abdicate.

To be specific: We have seen this force of conformity operate in North Carolina. For example, there are the Moravians, the old Unitas Fratrem of the eighteenth century. They were pacifists and communists (that is, Christian communists, not Russian communists) when they came into North Carolina. In two centuries they have prospered and become involved in industry and banking. What happened to the communism then? It got unpopular because it wasn't expedient; it wouldn't work when they were interested in their own fortunes. Moreover, it couldn't hold up in the face of the disapproval of the neighbors. And so it went. And the pacifism? That has always been an unpopular doctrine for a Christian group to have in the presence of neighboring Christians. It was unpopular when Jesus expressed it at the time Peter would rather have cut off a soldier's ear. And so the Moravian pacifism was abandoned. The great pressure of conformity asserted itself until the Moravian church in North Carolina hasn't taken a stand on any issue that I can remember. It has kept some pretty and quaint customs and is socially very acceptable. But last time it met in convention, it worried about not growing any in the past ten years.

For another North Carolina example, consider the Quakers. Essentially the Quakers are influential far beyond their numbers because, in some parts of the country, they will take a stand. But the North Carolina Yearly Meeting is never heard from on any controversial issue. Instead of being influential far beyond their numbers, they are simply and frankly without influence in North Carolina. It is an acceptable thing to be a Quaker in North Carolina; but it is not a sacrificial thing to be, nor a brave thing to be, nor a risky thing to be.

And so we come to the Universalists in Eastern North Carolina. The great pressure of conformity and proximity has worked on that church too. Perhaps the Universalists have had a double disadvantage. When they were numerous in North Carolina, they were preaching a doctrine that was radical and

brave and even dangerous. And then in the nature of things, without the pressure of opinion exerted on the Universalists, the preachments of the other churches came near to the Universalist position. Whatever brought this about (and quite possibly it came about because public opinion pressured the majority churches without changing their doctrines) the neighboring churches changed their preaching and didn't talk about eternal damnation and hell-fire and an avenging God. Outwardly, the old Universalist beliefs weren't distinctive any more. Eternal damnation and an angry God might be on the books of the other churches, but such things weren't mentioned in the pulpits.

Thus, one mark of distinction, one point of independence, one real strength virtually evaporated within our lifetime. The others caught up with the Universalists.

But that's not the whole story. I'm afraid the Universalists have been quite willing to conform to the majority around them, quite willing to assure their neighbors that they are not so different after all. Well, if they're not so different, why have a struggling minority? I think a lot of North Carolinians have asked that question to the detriment and decline of Universalism. And it is a good question. If one is no different from the people on the band wagon, then why not get on the band wagon? Isn't that the strength of the minorities, that they are different? The Moravians cut a tremendous swath in their day because they took a stand on some convictions that were different. The Quakers all through their history and in our own day outside North Carolina have mattered because they uncompromisingly stood for their peculiar convictions. And the Universalists mattered in this state when they were a peculiar people. There is a strength in numbers and majorities. But there is a strength also in distinctiveness, the strength of minorities. For a minority there is a weakness in yielding to all the forces of pressure to conformity that abound in the modern world. That ground has been preempted; the majority has a corner on conformity. And a Universalist group that tried, or was even willing to conform would either make a botch of imitating the crowd or would merge and lose itself in the crowd.

I am sure that *the potential strength and the hope of Universalism and of all liberal Christianity is in its pioneering difference, not in the similarity to everybody else.* The forces of conformity will push the Universalist church to the wall if they have their way — not because they dislike Universalists particularly, but because conformity will push any and all distinctiveness to the wall. Let us set up for ourselves a force of nonconformity, a positive witnessing for what is different, a sticking of our necks far out if need be. Let us be the unorthodox and so gather to ourselves the strength that inheres in a minority — and the pride that inheres there — and the respect for ourselves and for human individuality and personality that inheres there.

A hundred and twenty-five years ago, the Universalist church was one of the four or five largest religious bodies in America. And then two things happened: the regular churches dropped their emphasis on hell-fire and eternal damnation and so pulled one prop out from under the Universalists; and the Universalists got so interested in being like the others that they themselves pulled out the other prop.

It is a bad thing to be apologetic and to water down one's convictions. *It is a bad thing to forget that there is a right to be unorthodox.* When that is forgotten, one has lost his respect for the individual and has put conformity ahead of integrity. And what we call liberal religion can't live in that atmosphere.

What then is the religious liberal to do in this day of the massed forces of conformity? He is, of course, to resist conformity as an end in itself with even more zeal than was urged upon his hearers by Emerson in another day. He will need more zeal, for Emerson was talking to village nonconformists who had but to resist a very local public opinion. The nonconformist now must resist an all but universal public opinion and he must search farther and listen harder for a voice in support of his own opinion.

Also, the religious liberal nowadays must cultivate tolerance more than ever before. Each village would tolerate its local atheist. Mass propaganda does not tolerate any defection. But tolerance is the respect for the individual that is basic to any liberalism. And tolerance does not mean merely admiring the village atheist because he dares to think for himself; it means also admiring the village Calvinist insofar as he has arrived at Calvinism by his own volition. *This is the hardest tolerance.* It is easy enough to tolerate various degrees of liberal opinion while they are all within one's own camp. It is much harder to tolerate those in the other camp who got there through genuine conviction also. But if we are truly to respect the individual, that is the tolerance we must have. And if we have it, we in turn, I feel sure, will be respected.

It is *not* easy to be different in this day of mass uniformity. So the liberal must exercise a third quality after resisting conformity and cultivating tolerance. And this will be hardest; he must have patience. That is hardest because results are so slow. But the results are also sure.

When he talked to the graduating class at the University of Nevada in June, Carl Sandburg quoted one of Abraham Lincoln's memoranda of just a hundred years ago at the time of the debates with Douglas. Lincoln didn't use this note in his debates, but this is what he wrote:

> I have never failed; I do not fail now, to remember that in the Republican cause, there is a higher aim than that of mere office. I have not allowed myself to forget that the abolition of the slave trade by Great Britain was agitated a hundred years before it was a final success, that the measure had its open fire-eating opponents, its stealthy don't-care opponents, its inferior-race opponents, its Negro-equality opponents, and its religion-in-good-order opponents. But all these opponents got offices, and their adversaries got none. But I have also remembered that, though they blazed like tallow candles for a century, at last they flickered in the socket, died out, stank in the socket for a brief season, and were remembered no more, even by the smell.

And Carl Sandburg, educated you remember in little Universalist Lombard College on the prairie of Illinois, added for himself:

> I am proud, in my passing speck of time, to contribute an humble mite to the glorious consummation which my own poor eyes may not last to see. So I could say, don't be afraid of lost causes if they go deep in your heart. Deep in your heart if you feel that what looks lost is worth your time, throw yourself into it. There'll be health for your heart, mind, and spirit.

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## Universalist Advance — 1960

*(Continued from page 18)*

Thirty centuries ago, a weak people striving to become a strong nation gave this pledge to their harassed leader at a critical moment when both leader and people were on the brink of failure: "Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and come and speak unto us, *and we will hear it and do it.*" There's the *whole truth* of the matter. "Let our leaders lead," of course. Yea, *and* — "Let our leaders lead *and we will follow*," most assuredly.

So let's go into greater Universalist Advance in 1960!

## UNIVERSALISTS REACH TO UNITARIANS AT SYRACUSE

I never went to a Conference with less enthusiasm, *nor returned with more.* This sentence sums up my personal reactions to the Conference last week in Syracuse of the Universalists and Unitarians. I went having favored consolidation of the two denominations; I returned *committed* to consolidation. Something happened, you see, at Syracuse. Something happened to all of us.

Something happened to the Universalists. They met the Unitarians and found that Unitarians are, more or less, just like Universalists except there are more of them and they make more noise. But, the Universalists decided not to hold that against them. No, it was obvious that the Universalists came to Syracuse committed to the proposition that the two denominations could form a new association and that this was the important thing. Problems tangent to this were secondary.

So the Unitarians learned something also, not only *about* Universalists but *from* them. They learned that generosity of spirit can, in the final analysis, accomplish more than Robert's Rules of Order. In short, it can make people become more as they really want to be. Time and again the Universalists yielded to their Unitarian brethren. Yet, increasingly the Unitarians began to be aware that this yielding was prompted not by weakness, but by charity. And, the message got across.

I have been a Unitarian for fifteen years. For all these years, I have walked with pride in the heritage of Francis David, Joseph Priestly, William Ellery Channing, Parker and Emerson. Two years ago, I came to Buffalo and to a merged church. With some effort I expanded my pride to include the Universalist tradition. Yet, I must confess, I remained historically and denominationally minded. Now, something has happened to me. I experienced the feeling in Syracuse that I was participating not only in a heritage but in the *creation* of a heritage — that I was not only a recipient of history but was a hand in the making of history — that here was a new heritage of which my children could say: They knew what they did and they did well!

Now remains but the final actions of consummation. There will be a plebiscite again in the local churches, to confirm our action in Syracuse. The final vote will be taken by both groups next May, 1960. If the vote there is affirmative, the first meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association would be in 1961.

— PAUL N. CARNES in *The Newsletter*, Buffalo

# Reactions Of Our Readers

## WE DID NOT TURN OUR BACKS ON CHRISTIANITY

To the Editor:

The action taken at Syracuse regarding the statement of purpose is a bone of contention to both Universalists and Unitarians, but is significant of the liberalism of our day. The debate centered around the question of whether or not we should add the words "Jesus," and "Judeo-Christian heritage" to section two of Article two. The original statement read,

> To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in their essence as love to God and love to man.

Typical of the amendments offered from the floor was such as the following:

> To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, especially Jesus and the Judeo-Christian tradition.

It seems to me that by leaving out the disputed words the two denominations were not turning their backs to Christianity and their heritage, but rather trying to face the world with a statement of universal inquiry. Christianity, Jesus, yes — but the entire wealth of religious thought also.

The final draft, which speaks of our purpose as "immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian tradition as love to God and love to man," accepts, at the very least, our Christian-Jewish heritage as fact.

It distressed me to sense the motive that drove some of the delegates to vote for the inclusion of the controversial words. There were certain statements from the floor that were representative of that motive. One person said, in substance, "Can't you see the headlines of *Time Magazine*? 'Universalists scratch Jesus!' " Another said he was ashamed to go home. It seems that what they were really saying was, "What will others think of us?"

Whatever growth Universalism has accomplished has been due to our uniqueness. Converts to our faith are people who are discouraged with the old way, the old words, the restrictive creeds. They are in search of a religion that keeps pace with the times, that is universal in scope, that is dynamic, progressive and free. Is this not the appeal of our faith? If what we believe and what we do are different from the mainstream of religion, it ought not to bother us if we are convinced of their rightness. If we would suppress our impulses to speak truth as we know it because somebody out there will not approve, then we ought to question the sincerity of our faith.

— David Blanchard
Swampscott, Mass.

## DR. GREENWAY ON MERGER

To the Editor:

Now that the battle smoke of the Syracuse General Assembly has been lifted, and having given myself plenty of time before writing this letter, I would appreciate it greatly if you would give it space in the *Universalist Leader*, department of Reactions.

Having lived for thirty years in Metropolitan New York, and having had plenty of time to see again and again the heavy steam roller of Tammany Hall in action; I say Tammany Hall would have had the benefit of a postgraduate course had it seen the big brass of our national organization in action at Syracuse during the October convention. What had been advertised as the Annual Report from our General Superintendent turned out to be a high-geared, well-greased propaganda document set in motion to give a tremendous push to the proposed "merger."

Years ago there was a movement known as "the Cross Off-Center." That movement played its hand last month when it twice successfully railroaded through the dropping of our specific ties to Christendom. To my way of thinking, it was a sorry experience to attend a church convention where Jesus himself was anathematized in the name of liberalism. Maybe I am wrong, but I thought The Universalist Church of America was a Christian Church, that it was not ashamed to be known as such. Soon we will celebrate the birth of Jesus and many of the men will read from their pulpits the familiar phrase: "and there was no room in the inn." I never thought that our Church would ever throw out the name of Jesus from its Declaration of Faith. It is true that on the last day, just before the convention came to a close, the nearly eleven hundred delegates restored the mention of Jesus and the Judeo-Christian tradition. I doubt very much if the majority of our delegates would ever have voted for "merger and consolidation" had the majority of the delegates not made that appeasement.

Having attended the convention with open ears and eyes, and talked with many of our ministers and lay-delegates, I cannot help but wonder what lies ahead for The Universalist Church of America.

There are a good many other questions that I would like to ask, but those I have asked are uppermost in my mind. Next May, the Unitarian Fellowship may well begin to realize that The Universalist Church of America might, in the near future, be a liability instead of an asset. In college we were taught how at many great church conventions much-valued, God-given time was spent on quibbling over commas, semi-colons, et cetera. We will remember the quibbling over the hyphen between Universalist-Unitarian and that the Unitarians felt that the Universalist name was more of an adjective, as it stands without a hyphen!

As far as I am concerned, the Universalist Unitarian Convention made me think of what Madame Roland said on her way to the guillotine when passing the liberty statue, "Oh, Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name?"

The so-called "liberals" showed little liberal spirit to those who differed. They were all too ready to stamp those who disagreed as "mossbacks."

Here is hoping that others in the minority group will come out in the open and register their protests as well as their reactions. Steam-roller tactics should not be practiced in church conventions, least of all by the higher-ups!

— Cornelius Greenway
Brooklyn, New York
November 13, 1959

## ALL WORDS ARE "LOADED"

To the Editor:

Enclosed please find a check for $3.50 for which you will please renew my subscription which expired with the November issue.

I was a bit broke, but after reading the fine articles in this issue, I found that I had the subscription price.

We were raised in the South and appreciate Mr. Joe Lovett's article even though we are passionately in favor of complete integration. He is certainly right when he says that the best way to integrate a school is to start with the first grade and work up a grade each year.

However, I think I know why the attempt was made to integrate on the high school level. It grew out of the historical fact that integration was first successful on the Graduate School level and then the College level.

As I read the articles by Robert Tyler and David Harris Cole, I was struck with an idea. It seems to me that the reason more people don't come into the Liberal Churches is that they have confused liberalism and skepticism.

I have heard Universalist and Unitarian ministers who sounded as though the liberal message was truly one of skepticism. Later, as I got to know them, I discovered that they were filled with faith and that faith motivated their lives. I wonder. Were they afraid to expose their own faith publicly for fear of being called illiberal?

We ought not to be afraid of a certain word such as "loaded." All words are really loaded and mean different things to different people. It is my firm conviction that there are many, many people, who are not situated in church homes now, who would come into the liberal churches with glad hearts if only they understood that it is faith that unites us. I believe that there is Pure Compassion at the very heart of the Universe, Compassion which is Eternal and Out-going; that underneath are the Everlasting Arms. But I don't care if you call it Buddha, or Jehovah, or God, or Krishna, or even That which makes for Wholeness.

— James H. Burkey, D.D.
Ironside, Oregon

## FOR JESUS' TEACHINGS

To the Editor:

Congratulations on your good report of the Syracuse meeting as reported by you in the December *Leader*. Am glad that there are still people in the Universalist Church who care for the Universalist teachings, and have not gone over to blind humanism. Am thankful that we still declare the Universalist Church stands for Christ and Christianity. Also for Jesus teaching of the Love of God and Love of Man. Keep up the good work.

— Merrill C. Ward
Abington, Mass.

## HOW A DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY BEHAVES

To the Editor:

I was pleased to see the full and prompt reporting of the Syracuse convention in the December *Leader*, especially to have the full text of so many addresses. Yet I could see that two people attending the same convention will see the same events through different eyes.

What you saw and what I saw, when the convention took its vote on Article II, were two quite different events. I did not see a "now confused and uncomfortable group of delegates" voting for the statement which did not mention Jesus or Christianity. I saw a large majority of the convention knowing very well what it was doing and understanding perfectly what it wanted. There was no confusion. There was a definite preference for a statement which showed we had moved beyond Christianity toward the creation of something new. It was not a moment of discomfort and confusion. It was a moment of choice, and the convention knew precisely what it was choosing.

After the Friday morning vote, something happened which apparently you missed. There were not merely "second thoughts," as though something had been voted which did not really represent the majority's beliefs, but a deliberately generous act on the part of a victorious majority toward a minority. A statement signed by twenty-four Unitarian ministers was circulated on Saturday morning, calling for the reconsideration of an amendment proposed by the Community Church of New York, which would insert the phrase, "Summarized in our Judeo-Christian heritage." The reason offered for this amendment was the most significant thing about the whole incident: " . . . we think it would be tragic if we were to leave this convention without achieving, without sacrifice of principle, what we believe would be a greater consensus." Clearly this is a statement of a majority confident of its numbers, which seeks to form a community in which the minority is accepted as a full partner. It was a really heartening example of how a democratic community can act to heal its divisions.

What I saw in these votes was an indication that we, as a denomination, have finally accepted the fact that we are not a Christian sect. It was an historic moment, and we may take pride that our representatives conducted themselves with great dignity.

— James D. Hunt
Cortland, New York

## SHE SHOULD BE LOVED

To the Editor:

If *God is Love* or Love is God, and if a minister's quest is a search for the *Way of Love,* then let *the truth be known* — a minister's wife should be one of the best loved. And if the aim for *happy and creative* people does not include the wife of the minister, there is something lacking in somebody's philosophy.

But one might as well accept the fact that a minister's wife is a second-class citizen of the church, and that her husband committed bigamy when he married her, having already been married to an institution.

It is fun, though, once you catch on to the "Way of Love" and to the "supreme worth of every human personality" and to "happy and creative people." Actually, one of our aims as wives is to give our best to our husbands, and to help implement a philosophy gives much more meaning than being merely a tool of an organization.

May *the power of men of good will and sacrificial spirit* fix up one little part of the Kingdom of Love!

Rebel with a cause,
— Katherine Fisher
Wausau, Wis.

# Association Of Universalist Women

16 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts

## WINTER SCENES

Most Universalists, when they try to visualize the Clara Barton Birthplace and the Camps, picture them as they appear during the summer — green grass, trees, shrubbery and flowers in full bloom, the ponds filled with water, groups of happy girls and boys enjoying their camping experiences and summer tourists driving up to visit the birthplace of the Founder of the American Red Cross.

Visitors to the camps during the rest of the year find things quite different — no campers, buildings closed, all quiet and deserted. However, those of us who visit the camps the year round have come to appreciate how beautiful they are in spring and fall and what a fairyland quality they take on after a winter snow. The pictures shown here were taken after such a storm.

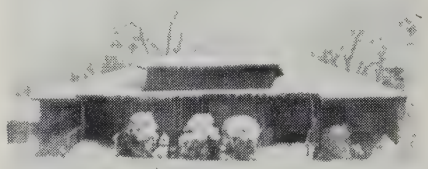
**The Birthplace** is open the year round and while fewer tourists venture off the main highways during the winter, there are still a goodly number of visitors even during the cold months. Local people patronize the Gift Shop.

The Christmas Tea was in years past an important occasion at the Birthplace. Discontinued during the war years, it was not revived until this past December when Mrs. Westerberg, the resident hostess, had two teas, one on Sunday, December 6, and another the following week. The house was most attractively decorated including a tree with trimmings of past years. It is hoped these pleasant occasions will again become an annual event.

**The Main Lodge** at the Clara Barton Birthplace Camp with a corner of the Priscilla White Medical Center in the right foreground. Exterior painting, landscaping and interior repairs were taken care of in the fall so the camp will be in excellent condition for next season. This is but one of the many advantages in having a year round Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds.

**Winter scene** on the road leading from the Clara Barton Birthplace Camp to the Elliott P. Joslin Camp, a road familiar to all Barton and Joslin campers. There are lovely spots on this road *all* seasons of the year.

**A view of the Elliott P. Joslin Camp Farmhouse.** Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Perkins make their home here. This house is one of the oldest in the area and has a most interesting history. During the winter months, Mr. Perkins keeps busy with carpentry work, repairing screens, painting and repairing furniture in either of two workrooms, the one in the basement of the Birthplace and the other in the Joslin barn.



**Dining Hall at the Elliott P. Joslin Camp** as it looked after a winter storm which left the branches of trees and bushes covered with ice and the campus blanketed with snow. The contrast between the off-camping months and the active season is accentuated by this snow scene for a view of the Dining Hall in the summer would show some eighty-five lively boys gathered here before mealtime.

# News of Churches and Church People

## NORWICH CHURCH RENOVATED AND REMODELED

The completely renovated and remodeled interior of the First Universalist Church of Norwich, Connecticut, was opened to both the membership of the parish and the public, and rededicated for service, Sunday afternoon, November 8, 1959.

The service was conducted by the Rev. J. Robert Bath, local minister, assisted by the State Superintendent, the Rev. Frederick L. Harrison. The Sermon was preached by Dr. Philip R. Giles, General Superintendent of The Universalist Church of America.

The sanctuary of the renovated building has a chancel section finished with natural oak on a black background. Its walls are white painted brick. On the same floor with the sanctuary is a well-designed chapel with acoustical ceiling.

The basement now contains a completely new and modern kitchen and service rooms together with educational facilities.

This beautiful, Universalist parish church, which was built in 1910, is now functionally more useful than it has ever been before.

Universalism in Norwich had its beginnings in the eighteenth century with the preaching of John Murray. Elhanan Winchester and Hosea Ballou, II, were also among the early preachers of the Society which was finally organized in 1820. What is now the First Universalist Church of Norwich had as its original name, "The Society of the United Christian Friends in the Towns of Norwich, Preston and Groton." In this parish, was organized the first Universalist Sunday School in Connecticut.

## NEW YORK FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Leon S. Simonetti was transferred from the New York State Fellowship Committee to the American Unitarian Association, December 10, 1959.

— MAURICE W. COBB, *Secretary*

## UNIVERSALIST SUPERINTENDENTS' COUNCIL HOLDS FALL MEETING

The Universalist Superintendents' Council held its Fall Meeting, December first through the third, at the Congregational Conference Center, Framingham, Massachusetts. Present were Walter E. Kellison, Michigan; Arthur G. Seabury, Rhode Island; Howard B. Gilman, New York; Robert S. Wolley, New Hampshire-Vermont; Donald K. Evans, Ohio; Milton M. McGorrill, Maine; John S. MacPhee, Midwest; Frederick L. Harrison, Massachusetts-Connecticut and Philip R. Giles, General Superintendent. Guests present were William E. Gardner, Connecticut; Kenneth C. Hawkes, Superintendent-Elect, Maine; George J. Spencer, Extension Director, Ohio; Donald Beebe, Treasurer, New York State Convention; Sam Beecher, Terre Haute, Indiana, attorney for Midwest Conference.

The Council reviewed the functions of the superintendencies in their service to churches.

Much time was given to the matter of regionalization including the proper size of regions for useful servicing of churches. Regionalization problems were discussed in the light of the proposed consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and The Universalist Church of America.

## REMEMBERING OUR FIRST THANKSGIVING IN BANGOR, MAINE

The First Universalist Church of Bangor, Maine, celebrated the Thanksgiving season with a program under the theme, *Remembering Our First Thanksgiving*. The Church Fair and the following Sunday service were linked together with this title. The Fair occurred on Thursday, the Sunday service on November 22. Pilgrim costumes were used at the Fair. Terms from that ancient day were used to

designate various booths. The Sunday service was inspired by an idea worked out by Mr. Harry Means, superintendent of our churches in Pennsylvania. Mrs. Milton M. McGorrill was the General Chairman of the Fair. Mr. Robert D. Smith, chairman of the 125th Anniversary Committee of the church, had the responsibility for the Sunday service.

On Sunday, four deacons in Pilgrim costume, carrying muskets, led a procession of the church people from the top of Park Street hill to the main door of the church. At the church door was a drummer, in costume, drumming the people in. Most of the women members of the several hundred in the congregation were equipped with Priscilla caps, collars and cuffs. The men were equipped with white Pilgrim collars and cuffs.

Members of the choir "lined" a hymn in the fashion of long ago, namely, without organ and without hymnals, the leader singing one line, the congregation repeating it after him. The original Thanksgiving Proclamation of George Washington was read. The sermon emphasized the Thanksgiving of the Pilgrims against a background of adversity. Glassine bags containing clam shells and a few grains of corn were given to the members of the congregation as they left. Attached to each bag was an excerpt of the prayer of Elder William Brewster made on the occasion when the food supply had diminished to clams and carefully allotted corn. The sermon emphasized the Thanksgiving to God and also the kind of faith in God that leads. The Pilgrims, even in their disasters, believed in, and worked for, a future.

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## UNIVERSALIST CHURCHES — WHEN IN OUR TOWN — WORSHIP WITH US

### CALIFORNIA

**Pasadena** — 11 A.M.
300 South Los Robles Avenue
Dr. Harmon M. Gehr

### CONNECTICUT

**Bridgeport** — 11 A.M.
(Stratford Section)
96 Chapel Street
Rev. Albert F. Ciarcia

**Stamford** — 11 A.M.
Forest and Prospect Streets
Rev. John Farmakis

**West Hartford** — 9:15 and 11 A.M.
433 Fern Street
Dr. Wallace G. Fiske

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Washington** — 11 A.M.
1810 Sixteenth Street, N. W.
Dr. Seth R. Brooks

### KENTUCKY

**Hopkinsville** — 10:45 A.M.
Third and Main Streets
Rev. Stanley C. Stall

### MAINE

**Bangor** — 10:30 A.M.
120 Park Street
Dr. Milton M. McGorrill

**Brunswick** — 11 A.M.
Corner Pleasant and Middle Streets
Rev. L. Gordon Adamson

**Caribou** — 10:30 A.M.
South Main at Grove Street
Rev. Gordon G. Newell

**Portland** — 11 A.M.
132 High Street, Congress Sq.
Rev. Earle T. McKinney

**Portland** — 11 A.M.
712 Stevens Avenue
Rev. D. Stanley Rawson

**Rockland** — 11 A.M.
Union Street
William J. Robbins, Ph. D.

### MARYLAND

**Silver Spring** — 10:30 A.M.
10309 New Hampshire Avenue
Rev. David Hicks MacPherson

### MASSACHUSETTS

**Attleboro** — 9:30 and 11 A.M.
North Main Street
Rev. Gayle Wetzel

**Arlington** — 10:45 A.M.
735 Massachusetts Avenue
Rev. Raymond J. Baughan

**Lynn** — 10:30 A.M.
20 Nahant Street
Dr. Fenwick L. Leavitt

**Malden** — 10:30 A.M.
Pleasant and Elm Streets
Rev. Richard Knost

**Medford** — 11.A.M.
29 Forest Street
Rev. Eugene S. Adams

**Melrose** — 10:30 A.M.
Essex Street
Rev. Albert F. Ziegler

**Salem** — 10:45 A.M.
Rust Street
Dr. Arthur W. Webster

**Waltham** — 11 A.M.
Church and School Streets
Rev. John Cummins

### MINNESOTA

**Minneapolis** — 9:30 A.M. and 11:00 A.M.
5000 Girard Avenue South
Dr. Carl H. Olson
Rev. Kenneth K. Marshall

### NEW YORK

**Brooklyn** — 11 A.M.
Ocean and Ditmas Avenues
Dr. Cornelius Greenway

**Herkimer** — 10:30 A.M.
Church School — 9:30 A.M.
121 Park Avenue
Rev. Thomas Turrell

**Watertown** — 10:30 A.M.
514 Washington St.
Church School — 9:30 A.M.
Primary - Kindergarten — 10:30 A.M.
Dr. John E. Wood

### NORTH CAROLINA

**Clinton** — 11 A.M.
First and Third Sundays
204 Beaman Street
Rev. Norman L. Sparbel

### OHIO

**Akron** — 10:45 A.M.
East Mills Street at Broadway
Rev. Carl J. Westman

**Belleville** — 10:30 A.M.
Rev. George H. Welch

**Cincinnati** — 11 A.M.
2529 Essex Place
Rev. Albert Q. Perry

**North Olmsted** — 11 A.M.
Lorain Road and Butternut Ridge Road
Rev. Phillips L. Thayer

**Springfield** — 10:30 A.M.
319 West Columbia
Rev. Harriet E. Druley

### PENNSYLVANIA

**Linesville** — 11 A.M.
U. S. Route 6 at Mill Street
Mr. Thomas F. Collins, Jr.
Dr. Henry F. Pommer

**Philadelphia** — 11 A.M.
Stenton Ave. and Gorgas Lane
Rev. Gilbert A. Phillips

### RHODE ISLAND

**Cumberland** — 10 A.M.
Church School — 10 A.M.
Diamond and Angell Roads
Rev. Arthur G. Seabury

**Woonsocket** — 10:30 A.M.
78 Earle Street
Rev. Henry H. Schooley

### VERMONT

**Barre** — 11 A.M.
19 Church Street
Rev. John P. Christensen

## AUBURN UNIVERSALISTS DEDICATE INTER-FAITH CENTER

An Inter-faith Meditation Center was dedicated in the Universalist Church, Auburn, N.Y., by pastor and people, Sunday evening, November 15, 1959.

The Rev. Myles D. Blanchard, minister of the church, presided and opened the worship with an Invocation.

Dr. Ralph A. Philbrook of St. Luke's Church, Auburn, read the Scripture. The Pastoral Prayer was offered by Rabbi Benjamin Rosayn of Congregation B'nai Israel.

Greetings from the N.Y. State Convention of Universalists were brought by Miss Lucille Smith, N.Y. State Universalist Director of Religious Education. Tape recorded greetings from The Universalist Church of America by Dr. Philip R. Giles were presented.

The Occasional Sermon, *Our Universal Heritage,* was preached by Dr. Roland T. Heacock. The Prayer of Dedication was offered by Mr. Blanchard, who also pronounced the Benediction.

## MRS. ROOSEVELT CALLS FOR "FRESH THINKING" ON DISARMAMENT

In an appeal to the nation's church women to do "some fresh thinking" about disarmament, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt warned that many things will have to be done before it can be realized. She addressed the United Nations Seminar conducted by United Church Women held prior to their three-day triennial committee meeting in New York City. The meetings brought together more than four hundred UCW leaders from across the nation.

Declaring that universal membership in the United Nations is basic to international agreements on disarmament, Mrs. Roosevelt said, "You can't leave anybody out because all must accept the basic principles of the UN Charter before universal agreement can be reached." She cited Red China, which is not a UN member but has one-quarter of the world's population and asked: "Shall all disarm but Red China?" This whole question must be thought through, she said, in the interests of world peace.

Mrs. Roosevelt compared the Russians' programs of economic and cultural development in the uncommitted nations with those of the United States. Their efforts are more successful, she declared, because they understand better the needs and desires of the underdeveloped countries. They also point to our failures in democracy such as segregation and make the most of treating people in those countries as equals, she said.

Calling for more realistic education in world affairs, especially of American children and youth, Mrs. Roosevelt said: "If we're going to lead the whole world we have to understand the whole world."

## MIDWEST FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Rev. Kenneth K. Marshall, a clerical licentiate for the past year, has applied for full fellowship.

The Committee will meet in Chicago, Tuesday, January 19, 1960, to examine him and act on his application.

— STANLEY MANNING, *Secretary*
December 9, 1959

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THE LOVEJOY COTTAGE, Ferry Beach, Saco, Maine, is for sale. Ought to go to a Universalist minister or layman. Immediate sale desired. Make me a bid. Write to Rev. Warren B. Lovejoy, Box 271, Central Square, N. Y.

## BESSIE W. KEELER

Mrs. Bessie W. Keeler, a life-long member of the Hightstown, N. J., Universalist Church, died in a nursing home at Windsor, N. J., October 14, 1959.

As an active Universalist, Mrs. Keeler was also an active citizen serving her community. She was a former president of the Hightstown Board of Education and a member of the municipal election board.

Funeral services were held in Hightstown, N. J., Saturday, October 17, 1959. The Rev. Norman DePuy officiated.

Mrs. Keeler, who was the widow of the late Charles J. Keeler, is survived by one brother, Edward M. Wycoff of Syracuse, N. Y., and three nieces.

## ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION

PATRICIA BATEMAN was ordained and installed as minister of religious education in the Church of the Unity, Springfield, Massachusetts, Sunday evening, November 15, 1959.

The Invocation was offered by the Rev. Frederick Libby Harrison, superintendent of Massachusetts and Connecticut Universalist Churches. The Readings were by the Rev. Harold K. Shelley, executive secretary of the Southern New England Unitarian Council.

The Ordination Sermon was preached by Dr. Angus H. MacLean, dean of the Theological School, St. Lawrence University, Canton, N.Y.

The Rev. Ralph W. Stutzman, minister of the Church of the Unity, introduced the Ordination Service with a Meditation on *The Meaning of This Act.* Mr. Franklyn Ferguson, chairman of the Standing Committee, led the Congregation in both the Act of Ordination and the Act of Installation.

The Charge to the Minister was given by Dean MacLean and the Charge to the Congregation by the Rev. Edna P. Bruner, associate director of education, Council of Liberal Churches.

The Benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Patricia Bateman.

## INSTALLATIONS

KENNETH JACKSON SMITH was installed as minister of the Universalist Church, Floral Park, Long Island, N.Y., Sunday evening, November 15, 1959.

The Opening Sentences were spoken and the Invocation offered by Dr. Cornelius Greenway, minister of All Souls Universalist Church, Brooklyn, N.Y. The Rev. Marvin Helfrich, minister of the Church of the Redeemer, East Orange, N.J., read the Scripture. The Address was by Dr. Homer A. Jack, minister-at-large, Unitarian Fellowship, Evansville, Indiana. Dr. Jack spoke on *The Next Decade in Liberal Religion.*

Mr. Horace Clapp, president of the Board of Trustees, led the congregation in the Act of Installation. The Installation Prayer was offered by the Rev. Lawrence Helie, minister of the

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Both the Charge to the Minister and Greetings from the New York State Convention of Universalists were presented by the Rev. Howard Gilman, New York State Universalist Superintendent. The Charge to the Congregation was given by the Rev. Henry George Cooper, associate minister of the First Unitarian Church, Worcester, Massachusetts. The Rev. Lester Auman, minister of the Methodist Church, Floral Park, N.Y., gave the Welcome to the Community.

The Benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Kenneth Jackson Smith.

GUSTAV H. ULRICH was installed as minister of the larger parish including All Souls Unitarian Church of Windsor and the Universalist Church of Hartland Four Corners, Vermont, in the Windsor Church, Monday, November 23, 1959.

The Invocation was offered by the Rev. Thomas A. Sinclair, Northern New England Superintendent. Mr. Sinclair also gave the Charge to the Congregation. The Charge to the Minister was delivered by Dr. Fred C. Leining of Brattleboro, Vermont. The Welcome to the Community was expressed by the Rev. Alfred H. Coons, minister of the Old South Church, Windsor.

The Act of Installation was performed by Roger T. Maher, chairman and Miss Elizabeth Spear, co-chairman of the larger parish. Mr. Maher opened the Installation and Miss Spear led the joint congregation in a rededication to their ideals. Mr. Maher invested Dr. Ulrich with his office and received the minister-elect's pledge of loyalty on behalf of the Congregation.

Addresses were delivered by both Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, President of the American Unitarian Association, and Dr. Philip Randall Giles, General Superintendent of The Universalist Church of America.

The Benediction was pronounced by Dr. Gustav H. Ulrich.

---

Man and society must grow together. Each individual's efforts to discipline himself must be matched by society's struggle to enforce the rules of law and of justice under the law.

— *Bernard M. Baruch*

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(Section 520, P.L.&R.)

## NOTICES

### CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

*October 29, 1959:* Voted that the conditional suspension of David Hayeman's Fellowship be revoked and his Fellowship reinstated as of October 29, 1959.

— ESTHER A. RICHARDSON
*General Secretary*

### NEW YORK FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Renewed the Lay Preaching License for Doris M. Trafton, effective March 4, 1959-March 4, 1962.

Issued Lay License of three years to Ralph N. Schmidt, Jr., June 4, 1959.

—MAURICE W. COBB, *Secretary*

### RHODE ISLAND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Notice is hereby given that the Committee of Fellowship of Rhode Island will convene at the University Club in Providence on the 18th day of January, 1960 at 8 o'clock, for the examination of Mr. Newall Deane Starr "as to his fitness in purpose, character, training and ability for the ministry of the Universalist Church."

— GUY W. MEYER, *Secretary*


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